

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, ECON, PA
SUBJ: PRESIDENT STROESSNER'S STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

SUMMARY: ON SATURDAY, APRIL 1 PRESIDENT STROESSNER OPENED THE NEW SESSION OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS WITH WHAT AMOUNTS TO A STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE OUTLINING THE PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTHS WORK BY HIS GOVERNMENT. SAVE FOR REFERENCES TO HUMAN RIGHTS, THE ADDRESS WHICH WAS CARRIED LIVE BY BOTH RADIO AND TELEVISION DID NOT DEPART FROM THE PREVIOUS YEARS' FORMAT. THE SPEECH CARRIED THE USUAL REFERENCES TO PROGRESS BEING MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT. THERE WAS NO DISCORDANT NOTE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION, PRESIDENT STROESSNER PAID HIS RITUAL DUES TO LEGISLATIVE FORM ON APRIL 1 AS HE GAVE A REPORT OF THE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH DURING THE PERIOD APRIL 1, 1977 - APRIL 1, 1978 TO A JOINT SESSION OF THE NEWLY ELECTED CONGRESS. THE PRESIDENT POINTED OUT THE RELATIVE STABILITY AND WELL BEING OF THE COUNTRY BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE OFFICIAL RULING COLORADO PARTY IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THE CHAOS AND DECLINE FIFTY YEARS AGO. HIS SPEECH STRESSED THE INSEPARABLE PRINCIPLES OF HIS ADMINISTRATION:

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LIBERTY WITH SAFETY AND PEACE FOR THE PARAGUAYAN PEOPLE. "THE RULE OF LAW FUNCTIONS WHEN IT PREVENTS THE INTRODUCTION OF TOTALITARIAN AND ANTI-DEMOCRATIC IDEAS WHICH THE CONSTITUTION REJECTS." THE PRESIDENT REJECTED ANY ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF PARAGUAY, A THINLY VAILED SWIPE AT THE U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY WHICH RECENTLY HAS BEEN UNDER CONSTANT CRITICISM THROUGH GOVERNMENT INSPIRED MEDIA ATTACKS.

2. STROESSNER ELUCIDATING THE PRINCIPLES GOVERNING HIS ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN POLICY, SAID "AT EVERY MOMENT WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONCERNED TO PUT INTO PRACTICE THE GREAT AIMS ENUNCIATED IN THE CHARTER OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES, INSTRUMENTS WHICH GUIDE THE INTERNATIONAL LIFE AND CONDITION IN A CERTAIN MANNER THE DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY OF OUR COUNTRY." HE MENTIONED HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND OTHER HEMISPHERIC HEADS OF STATE DURING THE PANAMA TREATIES SIGNING LAST SEPTEMBER.

3. THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON THE ECONOMY WERE UPBEAT, AS THEY HAVE REASON TO BE. AMONG THE STATISTICS HE CITED (MOST OF WHICH HAVE BEEN REPORTED PREVIOUSLY) GNP INCREASED 8.1 PERCENT IN REAL TERMS IN 1977 COMPARED TO 7.5 PERCENT THE YEAR BEFORE. EXPORTS WERE UP OVER 50 PERCENT TO \$278 MILLION. CENTRAL BANK GROSS RESERVES REACHED \$259 MILLION AT THE END OF THE YEAR, UP MORE THAN 70 PERCENT FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR. PRODUCTION OF COTTON, SOY BEANS, AND TOBACCO ALL SHOWED HEALTHY INCREASES.

4. COMMENT: UNUSUAL WERE THE PRESIDENT'S SEVERAL REFERENCES TO INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CHARTER OF OAS. THE GOVERNMENT EVIDENTLY FEELS A NEED TO RESPOND IN SOME WAY TO HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, COUCHED IN THE SELF SERVING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DOCTRINE OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES WITHIN THE ESTABLISHED LIMITS IMPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, THE TONE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THIS SPEECH WAS LESS COMBATIVE THAN HIS CHRISTMAS MESSAGE.

5. ANOTHER POINT INFERRED IN THE SPEECH IS THE NEED TO GIVE CREDIT TO THE RULING COLORADO PARTY FOR ITS SUPPORT IN CARRYING OUT GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS. THIS BOLSTERS THE THESIS THAT, THOUGH STROESSNER'S PERSONAL POWER CONTINUES UNDIMINISHED, IT IS NOT SELF GENERATING, AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIETY, I.E., ARMED FORCES, BUREAUCRACY AND PARTY ARE AN INDISPENSABLE ELEMENT IN THE GOVERNING FORMULA ALBEIT WHILE PLAYING THEM OFF AGAINST EACH OTHER.

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